

**Essay Two**  
HMXP102  
Prof. Oakes  
Winthrop University

Central Question, this section: What is the relationship between the self and other persons?

In this section, we read about the human self in the context of community or society – i.e., the relationship between self and others. We see the self identified as an individual, that is, *as distinct* from its association with others, giving us the concept of the *autonomous* self. Jefferson and Friedman provide accounts of this self, accounts that attempt to specify the nature of human autonomy in political, social, and economic terms. We also see in this section views challenging the primacy of this idea of the self. Swimme and Marx may be viewed as challenging Friedman’s ideal of economic autonomy. Menkiti, Myers, and Cisneros indicate ways of seeing human identity as a function of one’s community or social relations. Further, in this section of the course, we consider the extent to which human identity is informed by race and gender, as described by Gilligan, DuBois, and Loury, where race and gender themselves are or involve social determinations.

Your task in the second essay is to explain how we should understand the relationship of these various accounts of the self. In particular, consideration of these views raises a number of important questions about the self, including the following:

- Is human autonomy our defining feature, or is our identity determined, in part or wholly, by external (social, communal, racial, gendered) factors?
- Is there a single, individual human self, or is the human self rather multiplicitous: i.e., am I, in some sense, not one thing, but several or many?
- Is it possible to determine clearly what is the self, or do the differing accounts leave us without any clear self-understanding?

Write an essay in which you identify a position in response to one of the above or a related question about the human self in relation to others. The general idea is to respond to the question, What am I? in the context of our readings in this section. Since the readings of this section offer potentially conflicting accounts of the self, you should address that potential directly. Thus, some requirements of the essay are the following:

- Assert, explain, and provide support for a thesis (claim) addressing the relationship between the autonomous self and the self as socially or communally constructed.
- Include reference to at least one theorist from both of our two general “camps” – Jefferson and Friedman, on the one side, and everyone else on the other (Swimme through Loury).
- The maximum word-limit is 1000. Include a word-count in your header; over-count essays will not be graded.
- Include a works-cited page for the source that you use; use proper citation format.
- Double-space your essay.
- Due: Friday, October 14 in class and via turnitin.com.